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After the passage of the fort and batteries below New Orleans, and the subsequent repulse at Vicksburg, and the withdrawal of the fleet to the mouth of the river for repairs, the Rebels commenced to rectify previous blunders and fortified Grand Gulf, Thompson's Point, Port Hudson, Donaldsonville, and all other important places on the Mississippi, — special attention being paid to Port Hudson which was the strongest point, in a geographical sense, on the river.

The latter was from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet high over the water, extending on a level at that height, about two miles north and about two miles due west, forming a sharp angle which no vessel could pass, without facing guns from all quarters, and having to pass these guns within a range of three hundred yards.

This place was fortified with two or three hundred heavy guns; and it was thought at that time that no man